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Items for discussion and decision: statistics for economies based on natural resources

Report of the Ulaanbaatar Group on Statistics for Economies based on Natural Resources

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2017/228 and past practices, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Ulaanbaatar Group on Statistics for Economies Based on Natural Resources. The report presents the draft of the handbook on Statistics for Economies based on Natural Resources, following global consultations. The Commission is invited to discuss the report and adopt the "Handbook for compiling statistics for economies based on natural resources" as international guidelines for the production of statistics covering mining and related activities.

* E/CN.3/2018/1.

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Report of the Ulaanbaatar Group on Statistics for Economies Based on Natural Resources

I. Introduction

1. The joint initiative between Mongolia and Australia to establish the Ulaanbaatar Group on Statistics for Economies Based on Natural Resources was endorsed by the Statistical Commission at its forty-third session, held in New York from 28 February to 2 March 2012 (see E/2012/24, chap. I.B, decision 43/108).

2. The primary goals of the Ulaanbaatar Group are to develop methodological and practical guidelines on statistical measurements for economies based on natural resources. The Group makes recommendations by establishing best practices in respect of concepts and methods to track mining industry activities and investments in mining, to accurately measure the mining industry's contribution to the economy; and to assess the impacts of mining on other social and economic sectors within the framework of the System of National Accounts. In addition, the Group aims to collaborate with countries that have economies based on natural resources and to develop practical recommendations on measuring the impacts of mining on the environment and on ensuring the comprehensiveness, reliability, accuracy, timeliness and comparability of relevant statistical data.

3. The Group last reported to the Statistical Commission at its forty-eighth session, in March 2017. At that session, the Commission: "(a) Welcomed the report of the Ulaanbaatar Group on Statistics for Economies Based on Natural Resources; (b) Agreed with the proposed plan of work to finalize the handbook on statistics for economies based on natural resources, including the conduct of a global consultation, and stressed that the work should be completed before the forty-ninth session of the Commission so that the Commission may consider the handbook for endorsement in 2018; (c) Supported the use of the draft handbook in the production of statistics on mining and in the analysis of its impact on the economy, the environment and broader society, and stressed the importance of the availability of different language versions; (d) Considered that the original mandate of the Ulaanbaatar Group will be completed after the endorsement of the handbook in 2018, unless a concrete proposal is made to extend the mandate of the Group to include, for instance, other types of natural resources" (decision 48/116).

II. Key outputs

4. The main output of the group is the "Handbook for compiling statistics for economies based on natural resources", the main purpose of which is to enable national statistical offices to produce a suite of statistics that would be beneficial to decision makers.

5. In line with Commission decision 48/116 (see above) the Ulaanbaatar Group conducted a global consultation between August and October 2017. A total of 25 national statistical offices replied. All comments were integrated into the draft Handbook, and an updated and final draft was presented to the Commission as a background document.

6. A glossary for the Handbook, which was developed on the basis of work by Mexico, was further updated and provided by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

7. The key users of the Handbook will be the national statistical offices using it as a guideline to produce a suite of statistics covering mining and related activities. Further beneficiaries are decision makers and researchers, who will get deeper insight into the data produced by the national statistical offices. The appropriate and timely statistics will be essential to informing governments, businesses and communities about the decisions that must be made to ensure that they maximize their use of natural resources.

III. Future activities

8. Upon endorsement by the Commission, the final handbook will be published on the Group's website.

9. According to Commission decision 48/116, and after the endorsement of the Handbook by the Commission, the Ulaanbaatar Group considers its work finished.

IV. Actions required by the Commission

10. The Statistical Commission is invited to:

(a) Endorse the Handbook;

(b) Thank the Ulaanbaatar Group for its work and dissolve the Ulaanbaatar Group.